

HEAD INJURY

The neurological residuals from head injury are the result of direct brain contusions/infarctions and the "shear effect" where axonal connections are disrupted due to the force of impact. While the former lesions are discernable from CT scan and other diagnostic tests, the latter are more subtle but can be detected in alterations in behavior, personality and cognition.

The head injury patient differs significantly from one with a stroke syndrome. In addition to the obvious sensorimotor deficits and post-traumatic amnesia, after head injury, more subtle functional impairments in the area of behavior, altered personality, cognition, communication, judgment, spatial reasoning, problem solving, attention span, etc., are usually seen. These deficits, either singularly or in combination, may create a significant barrier to the safe operation of a motor vehicle. Judgment may be so affected that the victim does not even recognize the impairment.

A person with any head injury with residual impairments should not drive until the person's competence has been evaluated by a qualified driver license examiner experienced in the assessment of such cases. In the interval, it may be necessary for the Secretary of State to suspend the person's license since voluntary compliance may not be guaranteed.

Following head injuries, particularly where the surface of the brain has been penetrated, there is an increased incidence for seizures. Seizure disorders as an individual entity are covered elsewhere in this manual (page 16). Any driver with the diagnosis of head injury with secondary seizures must be reviewed separately under both sections since a road evaluation may be required under the former but not necessarily because of the latter.

FUNCTIONAL ABILITY PROFILE:
HEAD INJURY

Profile Levels	Circumstances*	Condition Example	Interval for Review
1.	No diagnosed condition	No known disorder.	
2.	Condition fully recovered & compensated	Any previous history of head injury with or without loss of consciousness with no residual cognitive deficits	N/A
3.	Active impairment: a. Minimal b. Mild c. Moderate d. Severe	Please indicate in comment area of form any cognitive or physical deficits a. Mild residual sensorimotor, visual or cognitive deficit from previous head injury not severe enough to impair safe driving ¹ b. Same as (a) , but ROAD EVALUATION REQUIRED¹ c. Significant deficits following recent head injury but with potential for improvement. d. Significant deficits following head injury with no potential for improvement.	a. N/A b. N/A c. No driving d. No driving
4.	Condition under investigation	Recent head injury	As needed
¹ Any questions should be resolved by a road evaluation with the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. ² Post traumatic seizures should be evaluated under the neurological profile.			

* For further explanation refer to page 1